

**SUMMARY OF THE
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 16, 2001**

The On-site Assessment Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Friday, March 16, 2001, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. William Ingersoll of the U.S. Navy. A list of action items resulting from the meeting is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Appendix A and proposed changes to Chapter 3.*

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Ingersoll noted that Ms. Rosanna Buhl's term on the committee will be completed this year. He provided information on a potential replacement member, briefly covering qualifications, experience, and background. Since the candidate was not well-known to the committee, Mr. Ingersoll indicated that he would fax a hardcopy resume to committee members for their review.

APPENDIX A (NELAC BASIC ASSESSOR TRAINING STANDARD)

Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor led discussion of the most recent revision of Appendix A, which had been electronically distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Sotomayor explained that he and Ms. Buhl had reorganized Ms. Marlene Moore's completed document to present course logistics separate from course content and to provide clarification of how the content will be delivered. When asked to point out sections of the appendix that he thought needed additional discussion, Mr. Sotomayor directed committee attention to the following issues:

Mode of Delivery - Mr. Sotomayor noted that he and Ms. Buhl are comfortable that the basic assessor training course can be delivered in a number of ways as long as the course intent is met and there are opportunities for interaction between participants. In subsequent discussion of mode of delivery, it was noted that the course materials developed by Dr. Margo Hunt will not be discarded. They will be posted on the NELAC Website as an example of a course that meets the training standard.

Providers, Instructors, and Participants - Mr. Sotomayor noted that instructors will not evaluate the qualifications of assessors. Responsibility for the approval of assessors rests with the accrediting authority. In subsequent discussion of this issue, Dr. Hunt noted that the training standard, as written, allows an accrediting authority to provide the basic training course for its own assessors. She suggested that participants in such a course would lose the benefit of interaction with assessors from other accrediting authorities.

Duration - Mr. Sotomayor noted that the training standard gives a duration for a *typical* course. The training standard is not prescriptive.

Course Documentation - Mr. Sotomayor noted that training providers may make example documents, such as checklists or flow charts, available to participants to supplement instruction. These materials must not be used to reinterpret the NELAC Standard, however.

Final Examination - Mr. Sotomayor directed the committee's attention to the portion of the appendix dealing with the final examination, where several areas had been left blank. These areas address who shall maintain the bank of examination questions, who shall be responsible for preparing the examination, and who shall be responsible for grading the examination. Mr. Ingersoll asked for input as to whether the appendix should be left open-ended when it is presented to the Conference at the Seventh NELAC Annual Meeting (NELAC 7) or whether this final portion of the appendix should be deleted until some resolution on the issue is reached. In subsequent discussion, Dr. Hunt noted that the committee already has a bank of examination questions that can be used to meet the immediate need. She reminded the committee that Ms. Moore had selected questions from the bank for the two different examinations given in the two pilot training courses and that Ms. Moore had asked for comments from the participants who took the examination. Dr. Hunt also expressed the belief that it would be good to develop a system for dealing with the issue. Committee members suggested that vendors will develop their own question banks and asked how it can be assured that the various question banks are equivalent. In response, it was suggested that vendors could be required to provide a copy of their examination to a subcommittee of the On-site Assessment Committee. It was also suggested that vendors could be required to send questions to the subcommittee for their evaluation for possible inclusion in a standardized examination. At least one committee member expressed the opinion that the committee will not have a bank of useable questions or a way to generate the examination in a timely manner. After considerable discussion, the committee agreed to delete this open-ended final examination section before presenting the appendix to the Conference at NELAC 7.

Attendance or Completion Certificate - Mr. Sotomayor noted that a Certificate of Completion shall only be awarded to those participants who have achieved a passing score on the examination *and* have attended all modules or instructional units.

In final discussion of Appendix A, Mr. Sotomayor noted that the revision does not specify the types of break-out group exercises to be included in the course. Although the choice of group exercises has been left up to the provider depending upon the dynamics of the class, the appendix does offer suggestions and guidance as to possible appropriate group exercises.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO CHAPTER 3

With little time remaining in the teleconference, the committee once again addressed changes to Chapter 3 proposed by Ms. Buhl. Mr. Ingersoll noted that Ms. Buhl had proposed a global change from "assessor" to "assessment team." This change was approved by the committee. Given the impending deadline for submitting proposed changes to EPA for publication for NELAC 7, the committee decided to submit the changes they had already approved and to table the remaining proposed changes for discussion at NELAC 7.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Ingersoll reminded participants that the committee's next meeting will be on Friday, March 30, via teleconference. The committee's allotted teleconference time having expired, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. EST.

**ACTION ITEMS
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
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Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Committee will review resume for proposed new member. (Ingersoll)	03/30/01
2.	Committee will submit documents to EPA for publication for NELAC 7. (Ingersoll)	03/19/01

**PARTICIPANTS
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